

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding non-final Office Action mailed July 26, 2004. Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 3 – 28 and 30 - 31 remain pending. In particular, Applicant has amended claims 3 - 21, and has canceled claims 1 – 2 and 29 without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer. Applicant has canceled claims 1 – 2 and 29 merely to reduce the number of disputed issues and to facilitate early allowance and issuance of other claims in the present application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of these canceled claims in a continuing application, if Applicant so chooses, and does not intend to dedicate the canceled subject matter to the public. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action indicates that claims 7 and 29 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As set forth above, Applicant has amended claim 7 as suggested, and has amended claim 21 to include the limitations of claim 29. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 7 and 21 are in condition for allowance. Additionally, Applicant has amended the remaining dependent claims to depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 7 or claim 21. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Double Patenting Rejection

The Office Action indicates that claims 1 – 6, 8 – 28, 30 and 31 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 5, 8, 9, 16, 21 – 27, 32 – 38 and 45 - 60 of U.S. Patent No. 6,698,231 in view of

Carter (U.S. Patent No. 3,811,559). With respect to claims 1 and 2, Applicant has canceled these claims and respectfully asserts that the rejection as to these claims has been rendered moot. With respect to the remaining claims, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 7 or claim 21. Since claims 7 and 21 are in condition for allowance for at least the reasons described above, Applicant respectfully asserts that the rejection has been rendered moot and that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Office Action indicates that claims 1 - 3, 9 - 20, 21 - 28, 30 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Abbott* in view of *Kluth*. With respect to claims 1 and 2, Applicant has canceled these claims and respectfully asserts that the rejection as to these claims has been rendered moot. With respect to the remaining claims, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 7 or claim 21. Since claims 7 and 21 are in condition for allowance for at least the reasons described above, Applicant respectfully asserts that the rejection has been rendered moot and that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

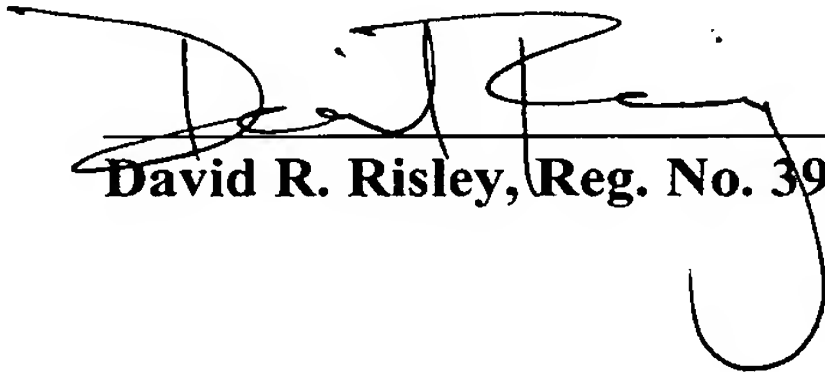
Cited Art Made of Record

The cited art made of record has been considered, but is not believed to affect the patentability of the presently pending claims.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

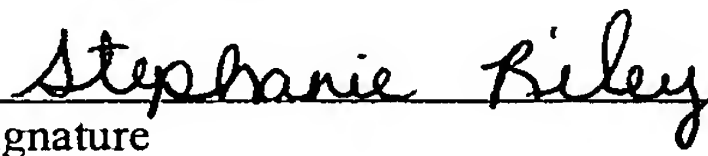
Respectfully submitted,



David R. Risley, Reg. No. 39,345

**THOMAS, KAYDEN,
HORSTEMEYER & RISLEY, L.L.P.**
Suite 1750
100 Galleria Parkway N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30339
(770) 933-9500

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on 10/12/04.



Signature